

and celebrate the freedom and protection that it has always afforded us.

In commemoration of the signing of our Constitution and in recognition of the importance of informed, responsible citizenship, the Congress, by joint resolution of February 29, 1952 (36 U.S.C. 153), designated September 17 as "Citizenship Day," and by joint resolution of August 2, 1956 (36 U.S.C. 159), requested the President to proclaim the week beginning September 17 and ending September 23 of each year as "Constitution Week."

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 17, 1996, as Citizenship Day and September 17 through September 23, 1996, as Constitution Week, and urge all Americans to join in observing these occasions with appropriate programs and activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:22 a.m., September 18, 1996]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 19.

### **Letter to Speaker Newt Gingrich on Legislation Prohibiting Possession of Firearms by Domestic Violence Offenders**

*September 17, 1996*

*Dear Mr. Speaker:*

I am pleased that you have now joined me in supporting legislation to prohibit domestic violence offenders from obtaining firearms. No one who has committed an act of domestic violence against a spouse or child should be able to possess a firearm.

As you know, Senator Lautenberg and Representative Torricelli have introduced legislation that would achieve this objective. The Senate passed the Lautenberg bill for the second time last week by an overwhelm-

ing and bipartisan vote of 97-2. It is now time for the House to act on the Torricelli bill and join the Senate in supporting this bipartisan effort.

There were 88,500 incidents of domestic violence where a firearm was present in 1994. I signed the Brady Law in 1993 and to date it has prevented over 60,000 felons, fugitives and others from buying handguns. My 1994 Crime Bill included the historic Violence Against Women Act, which made it a crime for stalkers and harassers under restraining orders to carry a gun. That provision is beginning to take hold—in Kentucky alone, over 300 stalkers and harassers were prohibited from buying firearms in one year. The legislation that you now support will build upon these important provisions.

I welcome your support and determination to complete this job. Protecting innocent women and children from deadly domestic violence is too important to let anything stand in the way. Bringing this bill to a vote in the House is an important step. But we must see it through to the end. Send it to me for my signature without further delay before Congress adjourns so that keeping guns out of the hands of all domestic violence offenders becomes the law of the land.

Sincerely,

**Bill Clinton**

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 18.

### **Remarks Announcing the Establishment of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument at Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona**

*September 18, 1996*

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being here and for being in such good spirits. Thank you, God, for letting the Sun come out. This is a sunny day—we ought to have a sunny day for a sunny day.

Thank you, Rob Arnberger, for the work you do here at Grand Canyon National Park and for your participation; to all of our distinguished guests. I want to say a special word

of thanks to my good friend Governor Roy Romer from Colorado. And thank you, Secretary Bruce Babbitt, for your long, consistent, devoted efforts on behalf of America's natural heritage.

I also want to thank the Harvey High School choir and the students and the faculty from the Grand Canyon Unified School who are here. Where are you all? Thank you. I think this ought to qualify as an excused absence—[laughter]—or maybe even a field trip.

I want to thank all of our tribal leaders who are here and, indeed, all of the Native Americans who are here. We are following in your footsteps and honoring your ethic today.

I want to say a special word of thanks to my longtime friend Norma Matheson. Norma and her late husband, Scott, became great friends of Hillary's and mine when we served together as Governors. After Scott passed away, Norma honored me by asking me to come to Utah to speak at a dinner in his honor for a foundation set up in his memory. I never was with Scott Matheson, I never even talked to him on the phone that I did not feel I was in the presence of a great man. Both of them are truly wonderful human beings. And I am very grateful for her presence here today and for her commitment.

And finally, I want to thank, more strongly than I can ever convey to you, the Vice President for his passion, his commitment, his vision, and his sheer knowledge of environmental and natural heritage issues. It has become a treasure for the United States, and I have mined it frequently for 4 years.

I remember when I was trying to decide what sort of person I wanted to ask to run with me for Vice President, and I made up my mind I wanted somebody who was smarter than I was—that left a large field to pick from—[laughter]—someone who was philosophically in tune with me, someone who would work like crazy, and someone who knew things I didn't know. And I read "Earth in the Balance," and I realized it was a profoundly important book by someone who knew things I wanted to learn. And we have learned a lot and done a lot together over the last 4 years. Very few things we have done

will have a more positive, lasting effect than this, and it will always have Al Gore's signature on it as well. And I thank him for what he has done.

Ladies and gentlemen, the first time I ever came to the Grand Canyon was also in 1971 in the summer. And one of the happiest memories of my entire life was when, for some fluky reason, even in the summertime, I found a place on a rock overlooking the Grand Canyon where I was all alone. And for 2 hours I sat, and I lay down on that rock, and I watched the sunset. And I watched the colors change layer after layer after layer for 2 hours. I could have sat there for 2 days if the Sun had just taken a little longer to set. [Laughter] And even today, 25 years later, in hectic, crazy times, in lonely, painful times, my mind drifts back to those 2 hours that I was alone on that rock watching the sunset over this Canyon. And it will be with me till the day I die. I want more of those sights to be with all Americans for all time to come.

As all of you know, today we are keeping faith with the future. I'm about to sign a proclamation that will establish the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Why are we doing this? Well, if you look at the Grand Canyon behind me, it seems impossible to think that anyone would want to touch it. But in the past there have been those who wanted to build on the Canyon, to blast it, to dam it. Fortunately, these plans were stopped by far-sighted Americans who saw that the Grand Canyon was a national treasure, a gift from God that could not be improved upon.

The fact that we stand here is due, in large part, to the Antiquities Act of 1906. The law gives the President the authority to protect Federal lands of extraordinary cultural, historic, and scientific value, and in 1908 that's just what Theodore Roosevelt did when he protected the Grand Canyon.

Since then, several Presidents of both parties, Republicans and Democrats, have worked to preserve places that we now take for granted as part of our own unchanging heritage: Bryce Canyon, Zion, Glacier Bay, Olympic, Grand Teton. These places many of you have been to, and I've been to many of them myself. I thank goodness that the

Antiquities Act was on the books and that Presidents, without regard to party, used it to protect them for all of us and for generations to come.

Today we add a new name to that list: the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Seventy miles to the north of here in Utah lies some of the most remarkable land in the world. We will set aside 1.7 million acres of it.

On this site, on this remarkable site, God's handiwork is everywhere in the natural beauty of the Escalante Canyons and in the Kaiparowits Plateau, in the rock formations that show layer by layer billions of years of geology, in the fossil record of dinosaurs and other prehistoric life, in the remains of ancient American civilizations like the Anasazi Indians.

Though the United States has changed and Utah has grown, prospered, and diversified, the land in the Utah monument remains much as it did when Mormon pioneers made their way through the Red Canyons in the high desert in the late 1800's. Its uniquely American landscape is now one of the most isolated places in the lower 48 States. In protecting it, we live up to our obligation to preserve our natural heritage. We are saying very simply, "Our parents and grandparents saved the Grand Canyon for us; today, we will save the Grand Escalante Canyons and the Kaiparowits Plateaus of Utah for our children."

Sometimes progress is measured in mastering frontiers, but sometimes we must measure progress in protecting frontiers for our children and all children to come. Let me make a few things about this proclamation clear: First, it applies only to Federal lands, lands that belong already to the American people. Second, under the proclamation, families will be able to use this canyon as they always have: The land will remain open for multiple uses including hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and grazing. Third, the proclamation makes no Federal water rights claims. Fourth, while the Grand Staircase-Escalante will be open for many activities, I am concerned about a large coal mine proposed for the area. Mining jobs are good jobs, and mining is important to our national economy and to our national security. But we

can't have mines everywhere, and we shouldn't have mines that threaten our national treasures.

That is why I am so pleased that PacifiCorp has followed the example set by Crown Butte New World Mine in Yellowstone. PacifiCorp has agreed to trade its lease to mine coal on these lands for better, more appropriate sites outside the monument area. I hope that Andalex, a foreign company, will follow PacifiCorp's example and work with us to find a way to pursue its mining operations elsewhere.

Now, let me also say a word to the people of Utah. Mining revenues from Federal and State lands help to support your schools. I know the children of Utah have a big stake in school lands located within the boundaries of the monument that I am designating today. In the past these scattered school lands have never generated significant revenues for the Utah school trust. That's why Governor Scott Matheson, one of the greatest public figures in the history of Utah, asked the Congress to authorize the exchange of nonrevenue-producing lands for other Federal lands that can actually provide revenue for the school trust.

Finally, I was able to sign legislation to accomplish that goal in 1993. And I will now use my office to accelerate the exchange process. I have directed Secretary Babbitt to consult with Governor Leavitt, Congressman Orton, Senators Bennett and Hatch to form an exchange working group to respond promptly to all exchange requests and other issues submitted by the State and to resolve reasonable differences in valuation in favor of the school trust. By taking these steps, we can both protect the natural heritage of Utah's children and ensure them a quality educational heritage.

I will say again, creating this national monument should not and will not come at the expense of Utah's children. Today is also the beginning of a unique 3-year process during which the Bureau of Land Management will work with State and local governments, Congressman Orton, and the Senators and other interests to set up a land management process that will be good for the people of Utah and good for Americans. And I know

a lot of you will want to be involved in that and to be heard as well.

Let us always remember, the Grand Staircase-Escalante is for our children. For our children we have worked hard to make sure that we have a clean and safe environment, as the Vice President said. I appreciate what he said about the Yellowstone, the Mojave Desert, the Everglades, the work we have done all across this country to try to preserve our natural heritage and clean up our environment. I hope that we can once again pursue that as an American priority without regard to party or politics or election seasons. We all have the same stake in our common future.

If you'll permit me a personal note, another one, it was 63 years ago that a great Democrat first proposed that we create a national monument in Utah's Canyonlands. His name was Harold Ickes. He was Franklin Roosevelt's Interior Secretary. And I'm sorry he never got a chance to see that his dream would become a reality, but I'm very glad that his son and namesake is my Deputy Chief of Staff and is here today.

And it was 30 years before that, 93 years ago, that a great Republican President, Theodore Roosevelt, said we should make the Grand Canyon a national monument. In 1903, Teddy Roosevelt came to this place and said a few words from the rim of the Canyon I'd like to share with you as we close today:

"Leave the Grand Canyon as it is. You cannot improve upon it. What you can do is keep it for your children, your children's children, all who come after you. We have gotten past the stage when we are pardoned if we treat any part of our country as something to be skinned for. The use of the present generation, whether it is the forest, the water, the scenery, whatever it is, handle it so that your children's children will get the benefit of it."

It was President Roosevelt's wisdom and vision that launched the Progressive Era and prepared our Nation for the 20th century. Today we must do the same for the 21st century. I have talked a lot about building a bridge of possibility to that 21st century, by meeting our challenges and protecting our values. Today the Grand Staircase-Escalante

National Monument becomes a great pillar in our bridge to tomorrow.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. outside El Tovar Lodge. In his remarks, he referred to Rob Arnberger, Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park; Norma Matheson, widow of former Utah Gov. Scott Matheson; and Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah.

### **Proclamation 6920—Establishment of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument**

*September 18, 1996*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument's vast and austere landscape embraces a spectacular array of scientific and historic resources. This high, rugged, and remote region, where bold plateaus and multi-hued cliffs run for distances that defy human perspective, was the last place in the continental United States to be mapped. Even today, this unspoiled natural area remains a frontier, a quality that greatly enhances the monument's value for scientific study. The monument has a long and dignified human history: it is a place where one can see how nature shapes human endeavors in the American West, where distance and aridity have been pitted against our dreams and courage. The monument presents exemplary opportunities for geologists, paleontologists, archeologists, historians, and biologists.

The monument is a geologic treasure of clearly exposed stratigraphy and structures. The sedimentary rock layers are relatively undeformed and unobscured by vegetation, offering a clear view to understanding the processes of the earth's formation. A wide variety of formations, some in brilliant colors, have been exposed by millennia of erosion. The monument contains significant portions of a vast geologic stairway, named the Grand Staircase by pioneering geologist Clarence Dutton, which rises 5,500 feet to the rim of Bryce Canyon in an unbroken sequence of great cliffs and plateaus. The monument in-